

# Wisconsin capital offers architectural, cultural mix

## 48 HOURS IN MADISON, WIS.

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From the charms and cultural diversity of State Street and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, to the architectural beauty and serenity of the State Capitol and lakes Mendota and Monona, Madison is the city Wisconsinites most like to brag about.

The city, about the size of Des Moines and about a 6-hour drive away, offers more than enough activity to fill several weekend trips.

**WHAT TO DO:** Capitol Square is the heartbeat of the city and a good starting point. Plenty of parking, with reasonable rates, can be found within easy walking distance.

Modeled after the nation's Capitol, Madison's version is only a few feet shorter, and every bit as stunning - especially after the recently completed 10-year renovation.

Free tours are given every day, offering visitors a civics and history lesson rolled into one. From the granite rotunda to the richly paneled Supreme Court, Senate Chamber and Assembly rooms, the Capitol's architecture is splendid. Huge murals, paintings, and hand-carved furniture enhance the experience.

State Street, a pedestrian mall closed to all traffic except city buses, stretches west from the Capitol Square to the eastern edge of the UW-Madison campus and serves up nearly 200 museums, shops, galleries, eateries and theaters to satisfy even the most well-seasoned traveler.

Highlights include the Madison Civic Center and Art Center at 211 State Street, which share a common entrance. There you can take a tour and order tickets for an evening performance at one of the center's two new theaters. Call 608-257-0158.

A Holiday Art Fair will be in the art center galleries Nov. 16-18. Madison's Holiday Parade is also on State Street the second Sunday in November. Call 608-266-9055.

Just two blocks from the State Capitol on the Lake Monona waterfront is Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright's final cultural contribution. Wright first designed the five-level art nouveau structure in 1938; however, it wasn't built until the 1990s.

Today it's a must-see for visitors to Madison and a source of great pride to locals. Tours are given daily at 1 p.m. \$3 for adults, \$2 for students. Call 608-261-4015.

**WHERE TO EAT:** The Great Dane Pub, at 123 E. Doty St., is one of 35 restaurants and 15 outdoor cafes within walking distance of the Capital. It serves a wide selection of sandwiches and appetizers but don't miss the restaurant's specialty -artichoke and cheese dip. Housed in one of Madison's historic buildings, seating is abundant and the wait usually short. There is also a courtyard where you can dine al fresco on nice days. Call (608) 284-0000.

Marsh Shapiro's Nitty Gritty at 223 N. Frances St. is a popular hangout for visitors who want to soak up the college-town atmosphere. The menu options are plentiful, but those who frequent the establishment recommend the Gritty Burger, a generous portion of chargrilled ground chuck topped with a special house sauce. Call (608) 251-2521.

**WHERE TO STAY:** With so much to do in the Capitol Square and State Street area, the adjoining Best Western Inn on the Park at 22 S. Carroll St. is an ideal place to stay.

The hotel has 213 rooms, including suites, two lounges and an indoor pool. It offers valet parking and a shuttle service to the campus. The Top of the Park restaurant on the hotel's top level offers great views of the Capitol, lit at night. Call (608) 257-8811.